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MOTHERS & SONS IN WAR TIME

ERNEST BARKER

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MOTHERS AND SONS IN WAR TIME

MOTHERS AND SONS IN WAR TIME

AND OTHER PIECES

(Reprinted from *The Times*)

BY

ERNEST BARKER

NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

LONDON

ARTHUR L. HUMPHREYS

1917

New and enlarged Edition

To

THE MEMORY OF

THE MEMBERS OF NEW COLLEGE

WHO HAVE FALLEN IN

THE WAR

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THESE pieces, written in the spring of the year, owe their original publication to the Editor of *The Times*, and their present republication to his kindness in making the necessary arrangements. What is more, they are all—with the exception of the first—due to his encouragement, for which the writer would like, in this place, to render his grateful thanks.

E. B.

September, 1915.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SIX more pieces have been added to this edition, which is thus double the size of the first. I have also rearranged the pieces, which were originally printed in a chronological order according to the date of their appearance, and grouped them in four groups according to what seemed to me their natural affinities.

I have once more to render my thanks to the Editor of *The Times*, which I should like to do not *pro forma*, but *ex animo*.

E. B

December, 1916.

CONTENTS

I. JUSTORUM ANIMAE

PAGE

Mothers and Sons 3
Haud Rediturus 9
Redeuntes 15
Life and Death 23

II. TIMES AND SEASONS

Easter Day 35
May Morning 42

III. THE NATIONS OF THE WEST

The Queen of the Nations . . . 51
We and They 60
'Cruel Necessity' 69

IV. TAMEN USQUE RECURRET

The Palimpsest of War . . . 79
The New Puritans . . . 88

I. JUSTORUM ANIMAE

MOTHERS AND SONS *

From 'The Times,' March 24, 1915

THERE is a chapter in the Bible, solemn and plangent above all others, in which the Preacher bids men to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, 'or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken.' In these last few days the cord has been loosed, and the bowl has been broken, for hundreds of English boys. Golden lads, in the flower and prime of youth, have come to dust. They have had their consummation, not in quiet, but in the din and roar of battle, with the noise of shouting and garments rolled in blood. Their graves will be renowned, and their names will be had in remembrance. But in hundreds of English homes their mothers sit to-day, remembering the sons who fed at their breasts and slept in their arms; happy if, in the watches of the night, some flow of

* The ensuing was inspired by the death in action, at Givenchy, of Lieutenant A. R. Herron, sometime scholar of New College.

tears may slacken the tense strings of the heart and lull the busy iteration of memory in the aching brain.

What does it all mean? A few months back the summons came. The name of England was blown on the bugles. He heard: there was a knocking at his heart and a flush of his temples; and he was gone. To-day he is dead—dead for the sake of a magic name. Is it more than a name? Promise and expectation—the opening bud and the growing shoot—seem nipped and withered, for ever. Has there been any consummation?

One of the old poets of England, writing of the noble nature some three hundred years ago, sang:

> 'It is not growing like a tree
> In bulk, doth make man better be.'

The metaphor of bud and shoot, he thought, was not made for man:

> 'In small proportions we just beauties see;
> And in short measures life may perfect be.'

After all, then, perfection may come and consummation be attained in the short measure of youth; and we may see that perfection, if only our eyes can behold the just beauty of

life. For the beauty of life lies not in living, nor in health and vigour of body, nor in the flash and speed of the mind, but in living with a noble energy, which enlists and mobilises the noble nature for the doing of noble things. To rise to the measure of a man and to attain to the just beauty of a full humanity consists in gaining conversion of the soul and in entering the service of mankind. He who has turned his eyes to an ideal good which is more worth while than life itself has found life; for he has become a living soul, converted to the light. He who has entered the service of mankind in order to realise among men and for men the ideal good which he has seen has entered into the only perfect joy of living; for he has hid his life with that of his fellows in the common life which is the only true life of man.

In these months through which we older folk have lived—lived in the sense of drawing breath—the young men have seen visions. They have seen an ideal face to face. To some the ideal may have been compact and epitomised in the name and cause of England; to others it may have shown an even nobler majesty, and worn the face of general human right—right to be throned as the sovereign

power in all human relations, as much between State and State as between one man and another. In whatever guise the ideal has come, we may be sure at any rate that it has come. For once in our long history our people have felt the call and thrilled to the compulsion of the ideal. All crusades belong to eager youth, and this war is a crusade of the youth. They march under banners none the less real because they are invisible; they march against the lust of force and the infidel pride of armaments. The Church of old promised to her crusaders the attainment of perfection through the merits of their great adventure. Shall we not hope that our youth to-day will find their perfection in a cause which, though it be no matter of winning an earthly Jerusalem, is a matter and an issue of building Jerusalem in this land of Europe?

If our young men have seen this vision, then they have found conversion of the soul towards the light; and if they have found that, then they have found life, even if it be in death. And in another sense, too, they have found life. They have been caught and rapt into the common life of a goodly fellowship. They have not ridden out single-handed on any lonely venture; they

have ridden shoulder to shoulder, stirrup touching stirrup, with brethren in arms from England and France and Belgium. 'Fellowship is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell; fellowship is life, and the lack of fellowship is death; and the deeds that ye do upon the earth it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it shall live on for ever and ever, and each one of you part of it.' If fellowship is life, and the common service of mankind is true life, the dead that have died are not dead, and will not die. They live in the common life for which they have died. They live in the better fellowship of the nations, which the work of their hands has gone to establish; and a mother may say in her heart, in a new Europe which her son died to make: 'Here and here I see my son; in this better thing and that nobler way of living I see him living on and on for ever.' So England will seem to her no name, but a common life in which her son found life; and perfection will seem to her after all to have been attained, even in a short measure of life, because her son had drawn from life the best that life can give—had seen the face of the ideal, and had enlisted his arms in the service of man.

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' If the remembering of God be the following of the beacon lights He kindles, and the serving of that mankind which He made in His image, then we may say that those who are gone remembered well. They are gone while the silver cord was still taut and strong, and the golden bowl was still untarnished and undimmed. To the eye of sight their lives may seem broken fragments. To the eye of faith another vision may be revealed. It may see the young lives, arch linked to arch, spanning the dark and misty valley of to-day, and bearing on solid piers the broad highway to a to-morrow which, in the providence of God, shall be worthy of the bridge that had first to be built, and of all that went to its building.

HAUD REDITURUS

From 'The Times,' March 15, 1916

THE grey walls of our colleges change but little with the changing years. Sometimes an old wing is refaced; sometimes a new wing is built; but there are quadrangles in which a visitor from five centuries ago might stand unperplexed, recognising the staircase on which he had lived, and half expecting to hear the men of his year come laughing down the stairs.

Nor do the young men, who make our walls their dwelling-place for three or four fleeting years, change greatly through the centuries. They still discover, generation by generation, the beauty of Greek and the magic of Plato, as More and Erasmus discovered them (for they are always being discovered) when Henry VIII. was a boy. They still discourse theology, and seek to find the true position of the Anglican Church, as Laud and Buckeridge talked and sought when Charles I. was still a child. Occasionally—once, perhaps, in a century,

or less—they hear the call of a trumpet; and then they go from us untimely—*haud redituri.* Perhaps some of them went to Agincourt; perhaps some of them stood by Sidney at Zutphen; perhaps some of them went overseas to fight for Elizabeth of Bohemia, because she was an English lady, and their chivalry was compassionate to her distress. One knows, at any rate, that they went to fight for her brother, King Charles—many of them, perhaps, young men who in days of peace had ridden over to see Lord Falkland at Great Tew, and 'found their lodgings there as ready as in the colleges,' and who now joined him (because they knew him, and to know him was to love him) in the service of their King, singing in their gay way as they rode off:—

'When first to Oxford fully there intent
To study learnéd Sciences I went,
Instead of Logicke, Physicke, School-converse,
I did attend the armed troops of Mars.'

One wonders how their tutors thought and felt, as they waited for news of Edge Hill and Newbury, of Marston Moor and Naseby. Perhaps they, too, ran through the

scale of hopes and fears, and knew at last, with a sudden catching of the breath, the awful certainty, as we who are in their places do to-day.

For there is a curious bond—sometimes, indeed, a deep and tender bond—between a tutor and his pupils. He and they have lived together for some years, and they have talked together of many things. They have been linked one to another in the intimate society of their college, so that it has seemed to them a family, and a very old family, and a family full of human affections, of which they did well to be proud. He has gained from them still more than they have gained from him. He has renewed his youth in their youth; he has kept his soul generous by its contact with their bright generosity; he has kept his mind fresh by its discourse with their fresh questionings. To-day they are gone from him—gone, indeed, where he would have them go—but gone, *haud redituri.* They have gone, he dreams, because they have seen face to face the Ideal Good of which he and they have talked, and heard the call of the fellowship (the fellowship in noble living) of which he and they have read.

Haud redituri. One by one they fall;

great and strong and wise, they sleep deep the long sleep of death in gallant company. Memory lingers over each one. One was a scholar fresh from his schools, thinking soberly and steadily of his country and her needs—of the federation of her Empire, and the healing of her social disorders by cunningly-ordered guilds. *Haud rediturus.* Another, a commoner of his college, tall, diffident, affectionate, found his zest in co-operation, and looked to a life of social work; but, hearing the summons, followed it, nothing doubting, and found rest in a soldier's grave in two short months. *Haud rediturus.* The chain of memory is long, and all its links are sounds—the sounds of the passing bell, tolling for those that are no more. Death has gone out with his sickle, and he has had a royal reaping. He has taken the tallest and most golden of the ears with a prudent selection; and those who, had they lived, would have been leaders of their times, and honoured in their generation, lie low upon the ground. Their seed shall not inherit the earth, but we trust that it has not fallen fruitless. Their memory and their example are with us, and with those that shall come after them; and it is a memory unalloyed. If it shall not quicken

generation upon generation, then they were better unborn. And yet—and yet—what would they not have been if they had lived? Their hopes were of service to their fellows, and in service to their fellows they have died. But if they had lived and served——? There is no answer. The inscrutable pall lies over them; and no question of ours can penetrate the unsearchable seal of Death.

To-night the bell tolls in the brain (*haud rediturus*) over one of the noblest—if it be not a treason to discriminate—of all the dead one has known who have died for England. Graciousness was in all his goings and in all the workings of his mind. The music and gymnastic whereof Plato wrote, that should attune the body to harmony with the mind, and harmonise all the elements of the mind in a perfect unison, had done their work upon him. He seemed—at any rate to the eyes of those who loved him, and they were many—to have the perfection of nature's endowment: beauty of mind knit to beauty of body, and all informed by a living spirit of affection, so that his presence was a benediction, and a matter for thanksgiving that God had made men after this manner. So to speak of him is perhaps to idealise him; but one can only idealise that which suggests

the ideal, and at the least he had a more perfect participation in the ideal than falls to the general lot of humanity.

Such he was: and now he too is dead. From the work to which he had gone, thousands of miles away (a work of service, and of his Master's service), he had hastened back to England, and for England he has died. His tutor had once written in his copy of the Vulgate: *Esto vir fortis, et pugnemus pro populo nostro et pro civitate Dei nostri.* He was strong; and he fought for both.

This piece was written on the evening of New Year's Day, 1916, *when I first felt sure of the death of my old pupil, Lieut. W. G. Lawrence, Exhibitioner and afterwards Casberd Scholar of St. John's College, Oxford* (1909–1913). *He was shot down in an aeroplane near St. Quentin at the end of October*, 1915.

REDEUNTES

From 'The Times,' April 25, 1916

THE end is not yet; and the track still winds uphill. Some day we shall reach the head of the pass; we shall begin to feel, rather than to see, that the little streams among the hills begin to run the other way, and we may even, at the last, descry with our own eyes (if we have still eyes to see, and they are not sealed in sleep) the valleys of peace unfolding in a far away sunshine. In that day we shall be too way-worn to let our imagination run very riotously, and too parched to cry aloud very joyously; and we shall say to ourselves that it will be time enough to rejoice when we are sure that peace has not its dangers no less perilous than those of war. But to-day we are still climbing; and as a traveller, far from his journey's end, lets his thoughts run ahead to the desired haven:—

'Cum mens onus reponit, et peregrino
Labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto'—

so we may sometimes send our fancy flying to a future day, and dream of the haven to which we shall come at eventide, and the banquet that shall commemorate our coming and celebrate our union together once more round the hearth of our common home.

On that day many will be gathered together round many hearths. Those who have gone from our colleges will meet, on the first Sunday of the new term, in chapel and in hall. Service in chapel over (at which, perhaps, we may sing that hymn of Abelard, which we always loved—

'O quanta qualia sunt ista Sabbata)'

we shall gather in hall, and sit in order in our places. There will be some of us in the flesh; there will be many of us who will only come, because only thus can they come, in the spirit. They will come from many places and many quarters; but they will not come as unbidden or unexpected guests. No place will be set for them; but they will know and understand, nor will they think for a second that they are neglected or forgotten. Many will come from France and from Flanders; and they will tell us that the college found a new playing-field there, where its men quitted themselves like men,

and strove, as gallantly as in them lay, amid dust and heat, for an immortal garland. One of them there will be, gentlest of all that went, wise in philosophy, cunning in music, perfect in love, who will tell us, with a little jest, such as he often used, that after having tried to teach for some years the nature and functions of Plato's 'guardians,' he had actually been a guardian himself for a while; and that Plato was right, after all, in holding that the guardian's life, for all its rigours, was at least as happy as that of Olympic victors.

Some, too, there will be who will come from the Dardanelles; and they, perhaps, will tell us that they found there a new site for digging, where the treasures were greater than those of Corbridge, and the spade unearthed wonders of archæology every day.* One of them there will be, with a piercing and rapid eye, and quick short speech, and a face bronzed by sun and wind, who will tell us how, if he had only had time (but it was not vouchsafed to him), he would have gained

* *The reference is to Lieut. A. G. Heath, who was killed in action near Hulluch in October,* 1915, *and Lieut. G. L. Cheesman, who was killed in action in Gallipoli in August of the same year. They were both fellows of New College: and they both taught for the same school—Literae Humaniores—the one on the philosophical, the other on the historical side.*

a new illumination for the campaigns of Miltiades in the Chersonese, and the battle of Aegospotami, and much besides that he used to teach and might have learned afresh—'So that if you found a fuller meaning in Plato, I should have found as much in Herodotus and Thucydides.' So they will speak to one another, and to us, telling where they fought and where their bodies lie, and what it was all like, and how it was all worth while—the cause being what it was.

What region in the earth is not marked by their labours? They have fought in three continents—so far do the arms of England reach—and they have carried the good name of their country pure and unsullied through all. Some there are who have fallen in Mesopotamia, amid the ruins of the Sassanids, and by the side of monuments far older than the Sassanids; and some are fighting, and, it may be, falling in the primitive jungles of Africa; and some are digging trenches in the desert of Sinai, and, when the cool of evening comes with quiet in its wings, letting their thoughts run home in story and in verse. What news of all they have done and seen will they not bring back when they come once more together? And how will the night suffice for all they

have to say? They have burst the bounds of university and study, and they have marched in action across the world. They have gone beyond the limits of this island, and they have done her work, at her bidding, in all quarters of the earth (and they are many) where she had work for them to do. Whether they live or whether they die—whether they come back to us or come no more—it is plain and simple truth, and no play of imagination, that these young men, who have gone from England, have made every place and every calling from which they have gone something different, and something richer, than what it was before. School and office, college and factory, *pauperum tabernae regumque turres*—it is all the same. Each of us speaks for his own, and of that which he knows; but what one man writes of his college, another may write as fully and as freely of the shop in which he and those who are gone have worked together. A new sense and a new dignity have clothed our ordinary lives. It has come with pain and as by fire; and we may sometimes ask in doubt and trouble of mind whether the price that had to be paid for this violent wrench out of our old ruts and above our old limitations was not exceeding heavy. But

whatever the price, something, and something well worth the buying, has been added unto us. We know that our citizenship of England is not a matter of taxes and votes, but of labour and blood. We know that at the call of a just cause we may have to surrender, because our conscience leads us and our community commands us, all that we have and all that we fain would keep. We know that outside this England, which was all that many of us knew, there are communities all the world over for which she has to stand, because they all desire to stand for her, and for which we have to die, because they are ready to die for us.

We know that we do not stand alone—neither each Englishman by himself, or for himself, in this island, nor this island by itself, or for itself, in the Commonwealth to which it belongs. And this is a lesson hard for us to learn, and yet very necessary for us to learn. For the life isolated and self-sufficing—each for himself, because 'each is the best judge of his own interests'—this had long been our presupposition and canon of life; and yet it is a presupposition and a canon by which life cannot be lived, if men and communities are to live together in a living society.

This, after all, is perhaps the real thing which those who return—whether they return in the flesh or whether they come back to us in the spirit—will wish to say. This is why they went; and it will be to say this that they come back. And therefore, when we reassemble, the solemn partnership of the living and the dead, in its first and most sacred meeting—in factory or in office, in college or in school, in Convention or in Parliament—has need for listening ears, and quiet thought, that it may hear, and hearing understand, the words of those who return. For we have to revise, as it were, the articles of our partnership, and we have to enter it in the charter of our incorporation—as a Commonwealth or a Dominion in the Commonwealth; as a college or a factory—that we are one body, one partnership, one association, fitly joined and knit together by that which every joint supplieth. It will be much when we make peace with the enemy. It will be more when we make a real concord one with another, and when, instead of fighting each as for his own hand, we solemnly covenant ourselves into one Commonwealth, one country, one college, and one factory. We shall only have won the war by consenting to be one body, and each one of us a

member thereof, doing his appointed function for it. We shall only win the peace (for that also has to be won) by highly resolving to be members one of another and each of us servants of the rest. And this will need much surrender, and not the least from those who in the old dispensation have had most. We shall have to call on the workers to remember that they are something more, and something higher, than a class engaged in a war of class; that they are members of a fellowship and sharers of a common life. But while we call these things to their remembrance we shall have to find them their due share in that life. And we can only do that if we call on the masters, and call on them still more urgently, to remember that they too are something more and something higher than masters; that fellowship is greater than profit, and the good life of the community more precious than the laying up of many treasures. But if we remember these things, and accomplish them in what measure we can, those who return will be blessed, and they will rest in peace, seeing the fruits of their labours, and the establishing of the works of their hands.

LIFE AND DEATH

From 'The Times,' November 11, 1916

FOR two years past the gates that lie between life and death have been unbarred. No longer singly, or through a narrow door, but in ordered companies and battalions, men have entered into the vasty halls of death. In the glare of battle and the thunder of artillery they have passed through the gates. As they passed, like evening figures burnished by a stormy sunset of cloud-rack and fire, they have seemed, for one splendid moment, magnified and transfigured; and then, in the twinkling of an eye, they are gone, and our eyes behold them no more. Unceasingly the march continues; unmoved the open gates rest on their hinges; the open way still runs from life to death, and the sense grows on the mind of the unity between death and life, the community between the quick and the dead. Death is grown a familiar friend, who has put aside his sting; and whatever

victories may be proclaimed, there is no victory of the grave.

These are days in which our old estimations and values are changed. Young men have set life against other things, and found that other things were more worth while; they have weighed death in the balance, and found death more tolerable than the things they could not tolerate. They have risen into a world of new proportions and perspectives, in which life was a little thing, held in trust for higher things—something to be resigned, if not without tremors, yet without doubt, when the trustee's duty demanded its resignation. They have seen that all their rights—even the right to live, and to draw happy English air into their blood—are the gift of the Commonwealth, given for the uses of the Commonwealth, and to be spent, according to the rules of all faithful guardianship, for the benefit of the uses enjoined by the giver. Into that world, and into that vision, they have mounted up with wings undismayed; and those who knew them, loved them, and talked with them, have learned from them the lesson they had learned for themselves, and have come to see what are the things of real price, and wherein true profit and genuine loss are

to be found. And so, when what had once seemed loss came upon us, and they seemed to die, their departure was not taken for misery, nor their going from us to be utter destruction ; but we could say, as many have said in their hearts, remembering the poet who touched the deepest strings in the religious temper of his people, that Samson hath quit himself like Samson :

> 'To Israel
> Honour hath left and freedom, let but them
> Find courage to lay hold on this occasion . . .
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail.'

Material values have altered in these years, and we walk in a new world of monetary prices. Is it an idle thing to say that spiritual values have changed, or that we walk in a new world in which the prices even of priceless things are different ? We have made friends with exultations and agonies ; we live on a plane and in a temper which in our normal years we did not know. Here in Oxford, in one of our college chapels, the memorial service has been said and sung regularly at the end of each term over the dead. Term by term the Dead March has been played on the organ ; term by term, at the end of the

service, the Last Post has been sounded on the trumpet. The fellow of the college who read the lesson at one commemoration service lay in his grave by the Somme at the next; and life, from day to day, has passed so steadily into death that one asks, as the Greek poet asked:

'Who knows but life may after all be death,
And death be life?'

But this is perhaps the temper of minds strained and wrought by heavy pressure; and the new values which we attach, in such a temper, to the spiritual facts of our experience may, like the new values we have perforce to set on things material, sink, or at any rate change, in the reaction of those future days when the tumult and the shouting die. We cannot tell what we shall feel, or what ultimate sense of loss may be the residue, until time has come for reflection and we can make up the account of our loss and our gain. The gates, after all, are open still: we still see through them into death; and our thoughts run backward and forward along the open road, so that those who are gone still seem accessible, and those who will never return seem still to have the way of returning clear. When the gates are

shut and barred once more, we may feel once more that death is death, and we may realise that the world of life in which we have our being has lost beyond recall its brightest spirits, its most joyous hearts, and most of its subtlest minds. In those days there will be many pilgrims to graves, and over them, as they stand by the side of those who are gone, the grave may, for the moment, gain its victory. The dead who died far from our sight, and who were buried far from our ken, will be known at last, and will be believed at last, to be gone from our world for ever.

We shall have to pass through the valley of regret, and of vain longing for the sound of hushed voices. But soon, we trust, we shall breast the hill that lies beyond the valley, and climb to a height where we shall see another vision—the vision of the things to be done, the gaps to be filled, the ideals to be made actual, in the new age of peace for the sake of which so many have gone through the gates of death. They have left us honour and freedom; they have left us also the duty of finding courage to lay hold on the occasion they have given. If they have died because they held their lives in trust for their country, we who live must

henceforth live as men who also hold our lives in trust for our country. Our country will not ask us for the last full measure of devotion which they gave, but it will ask, and it will need, every service which we can give for its perfection. It would be treason to those who gave their lives for England in war if we did not, after their good example, give our lives to England in peace. There will be so much in years to come that we can do to make our country better—so much in the way of improvement of her system of education; so much in the way of improvement of the relations between masters and workmen; so much in every state of life to which it shall please God to call us, that there is likely to be little enough time for thinking of ourselves and our own self-realisation, even if such thinking of ourselves were itself a healthy thing. And it will be all the more incumbent upon us to think of all the great new things which we shall have the occasion of doing, since so many of the eager minds that loved to think and to dream of these things will be hushed and quiet. So much of the spring has been taken out of the year; so great, therefore, is the burden laid on all that are left—the young who have been too young for the

war, and the old who have been too old. We must make that old French sigh for the unattainable—*si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*—into something actually attained; we must make the young men wise and understanding, and we must turn the cautious and world-weary temper of older years into power and courage.

* * * * *

Many of those who have gone to their death were fond of disparaging, with a certain shy self-depreciation natural to men of their country, the quality of their own motives and the temper of their own courage. They went—so they said—because no man with any self-respect could do otherwise, and because they had no choice. They would tell you, frankly, that they were far from being even 'half in love with easeful death'; that they dreaded, as every human being must dread, the thought that they must cease to be. They could talk quietly of the chances of life and death—how the chances of death were as ten to one, and yet how each, in his inmost heart, believed that he would be an exception to the odds. This matter of the chances of life and death was often present to their

minds (how could it be otherwise?), and if sometimes it might end in fatalism, often it brought them into a very close and living dependence on the Maker and Giver of life and death. Whatever their thoughts, and whatever their fears of death, there was one thing they dreaded most—and that was lest, when the ordeal came, they might fail to meet it with the quick insight and ready resolution which it needed. This dread was almost always ungrounded, but it was a noble dread. What they feared, after all, was at bottom this: that they might not, in a crisis, do their duty by their men, or by their brother officers, or by their commander. In a word, they feared lest they should fail to do 'their duty to their neighbours.' And that, though they may have been unconscious of it, was really their motive and their rule of life. It is what we also have to make our motive and our rule of life. If we do that, we need fear no evil. If we do that, the community of the living and the dead will remain: and between those who died in this spirit and those who live in this spirit there will be fellowship and understanding. Thus, and thus only, the gates between life and death will still stand open, and the open road of communion in a com-

mon purpose will keep us close to those whom we have lost — and whom again, because we are true to them and because we keep alive their spirit in ourselves, we have not lost at all.

In writing this piece entitled Life and Death, *I had much in mind the memory of two other fellows of New College, who have both been killed in action on the Somme this year—Captain G. W. Smith, who was one of the brightest spirits and one of the subtlest minds of his time, and Lieut. L. W. Hunter, who read the lesson from Ecclesiasticus at one commemoration service, in a way I still remember, and whom more than one man mourns to-day as a loyal and steadfast friend. He had read, and written or talked to me about, some of the earlier pieces in this book ; and I should like to inscribe this piece to his memory.*

II. TIMES AND SEASONS

EASTER DAY

From 'The Times,' April 3, 1915

TO-MORROW the bells will be ringing through the land from every tower and spire. Their sound will go out from thousands of villages—along the waters of the Cumberland lakes, in the limestone dales of Derbyshire, in the folds of the Wessex downs, along the levels of the fens, and in Cornish valleys by the sea. There is nothing that comes so near to being the very authentic voice of England as the bells of her village churches, falling and swelling, pealing and dying, from the north to the south and the east to the west. One reads that in the fighting at Neuve Chapelle, when there was a sudden lull of the guns, there could be heard, pouring his full heart abroad, a carolling lark in the skies. May there not have come too (even, perhaps, in the full thunder and crash of artillery) a sound to the inward ear, in some moment when the present swam suddenly away, and memory

usurped the throne of perception for the space of a second—a sound of the ringing of bells, down green country lanes, on a sunny morning of spring? May not the voice of England have come across the fancy of some English boy in that remembered sound, and nerved him to meet the foe like fire for her and hers?

What does England say, as the sound of her voice leaps across from valley to valley, over soft rounded shoulders of the hills, where great fresh winds are blowing, and shadows are racing along the sunny grass in rivalry with the scudding clouds above? 'I stand on guard,' we may hear her saying, 'and without hurrying or tarrying I go about my appointed business in this great and terrible day of the Lord. I stand on guard at the mouths of ancient rivers, by the ancient cradles of human civilisation, along the Euphrates and the Nile. I stand on guard at the Hellespont, where Greeks besieged and conquered Troy; I stand on guard in the Low Countries, where Philip Sidney fell, and Marlborough went to war, and Wellington won the day a hundred years ago. I stand on guard in the ancient places, and my hand remembers its ancient cunning. Quietly over the waters—whatever the unseen death

that lurks beneath, or the flying terror that hums above—my long ships glide. Stuff of war is in their holds; men at arms line their decks; from East to West, and from West to East they move to and fro like a weaver's shuttle, and no man stays their goings. How shall I not be proud, as I stand in the ancient ways with a new strength ten times stronger than any I had before—the strength of gallant youth, thousands upon thousands, thousands upon thousands, who came when I called, and brought to my call the abounding vigour of young blood, the gay ardour of young spirits, and the noble purpose of young thought? God guard my far-flung battle line; God guard my ships in their goings to and fro; God guard above all my youth, my chosen youth.'

So we may imagine England, with a high heart and a taut courage, communing with herself in the peal of the bells. Her grey eyes, we may fancy, shine august; they harden to steel when she gazes seawards; they melt to a liquid pity when she bends over those who have fallen dead at her side for her sake. Of her, who is ourselves, and of ourselves, who are hers, we shall do no wrong to be proud. Let us rejoice, and be exceeding glad, that we were citizens of

England in this hour. Our country, after all, was not so absorbed in the getting of wealth but that she was eager to pluck bright Honour from the jaws of death; she had not gone after pleasure so whole-heartedly but that she would give her heart and her strength to the call and claim of Right. We can love her freely, because she has loved Honour freely; we can say to her that we should not love her so much if we did not love Honour more, and if we did not find Honour abiding in her company.

But the bells can fall to a slower modulation, and after the air has throbbed with the clash of exaltation there may come the quiet, single note of self-questioning and doubt. There is much of which we do no wrong to be proud; there are some things of which we shall do no wrong to repent. There were days when our hearts grew foolishly hot against the enemy stranger in our gates. There were days—and they are perhaps still with us—when the fever of war ran riot in the veins of our sons and daughters; when the steady motion of our blood was troubled, and chastity and continence fell away. It is hard for a people that has quitted the ancient ways of peace for the strain and stress of war to keep the

nerve from quivering, and the heart from rioting, and the head from troubling. We all need to pray, and to pray earnestly, that our hearts may be established in quietness, and our eyes opened to see the thing that is right, and our hands strengthened to do what in us lies for the state of Christ's Church militant here on earth. For to that Church this England of ours belongs; by her membership of that Church this England of ours is strong. The times of England are in His hand; and so far as England serves His plan, so far is she justified of her labours. She is ours, and we are hers; but our society—intimate as it is to-day, and consecrated as it seems to us by its high calling—can only move and have its being in the higher calling of that higher Society, wherein alone we have our perfect consummation.

'O let England bless the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever.' That is the last, the truest, the most authentic voice of our English bells. Let us therefore highly resolve, that whatever we have done and whatever we may do shall be done in His name and unto His praise. If we think meanly of our cause, we shall make it a mean cause by our thinking. If we think that our cause is only the gaining of trade,

or the destruction of a rival navy, or the security of our vast possessions, we shall make our cause and ourselves no higher than our thoughts. But if we think nobly of our cause we shall make it a noble cause by our thinking. If we think that our cause is first and foremost, last and uttermost, the cause of Belgian liberty ; the cause of French security ; a cause of the better fellowship of all peoples ; a cause of the assuaging of swollen armaments and the redressing of the wrongs of wronged nationalities—our cause will rise to the measure of our thinking. If only we can think thus nobly, history may say that once at any rate sparks were struck in England, and a fire was kindled there which warmed the earth ; and we may ourselves feel, in our own day, that in our measure we have magnified the Lord.

Much has been taken from us in these latter months of young and precious lives. Much—He only knows how much—will be taken in the months to come. What will abide? Nothing that is worth the price, unless our hearts are surely fixed where true joys are to be found. But if once they are surely fixed on the high and ultimate issues which alone are worth the price, then there will abide these three—Faith, Hope

and Charity; and the greatest of these is Charity—a Charity wide enough, and deep enough, to create the new fellowship, without which all that has been done, and all that will be done, is nothing worth. And so, if England stands on guard for these three, we may love her unreservedly with all our hearts; and we may say to her out of our love:

'O my heart's heart, and you who are to me
More than myself myself, God be with you,
Keep you in strong obedience leal and true
To Him whose noble service setteth free . . .
Bless you in what you bear and what you do,
Yea, perfect you as He would have you be.'

For love always wishes the best for that which it loves, and loves the more, as that which it loves shows itself better and better; and we who love England must not only love her for what she is, but for what she can be, and for what, by our thought for her, and our love for her, we can help her to become.

MAY MORNING

From 'The Times,' May 3, 1916

KUT has fallen, and we wait to hear the reverberations of its fall. Ireland is in uproar; and the traveller, from the deck of his ship, watches the smoke of bombardment staining the quiet evening light in the West. Our thoughts are electric; the lightning runs through our human world, stabbing suddenly here and there, and crashes of thunder shake the composure of our blood. It is all abundantly real; it may all, indeed, seem a pungent elixir of reality, concentrated to a fine intensity; and yet there are times when it all fades into an unsubstantial pageantry, a noiseless vision of airy cloud-rack, pinnacled far away in space, remote from the green earth, and alien to the young year.

The immemorial miracle of spring—flowers and bud and the song of birds—is at our doors, and before our eyes, and in our ears. The garden is blue with aubrietia, frag-

rant with wall-flower, piping with thrushes; the double-cherry, a snowy miracle, stands sentinel along the road; the sun, who was up betimes, dances gaily in the heavens over all. Marvellous things of dream may be befalling on Malvern Hills this May morning, as they befell Langland long ago; and children are carrying about the streets, as they have done before, garlands of greenery in honour of May. We are living in new times, and among happenings new and strange; but our mother Earth is still an old, true friend, and our poets are still dreaming, and our children are still children, with the old games, that run back to times beyond memory, and the old rhymes that, heard in after years, are charged so bitter-sweet for the hearer with memories of his own life's spring-time. It is good to be in England now—though it is better still to be away from England, standing on guard for her sake, and remembering, in the hours of waiting and watching, how she is dressed as a bride in blossom, through all her orchards and hedge-rows, and in all her gardens and meadows. It is good to be in England, and to know that she is the same goodly land we have always known—quiet, steady, and true; walking still in the old ways, cleaving still to

the old truths, and following still the old fashions, 'as she has done before.'

For after all essential England is not dead, or sick, or changed. Men fever and fret in the capital. They debate in their solemn houses, and they argue in their eager newspapers, how this thing must be done at once, and that must no longer be left undone, saying 'otherwise we perish, and our epitaph is written,

> Fuit Anglia et ingens
> Gloria Brittonum.'

And no doubt many of these things are true, and very true, and very bitterly true. But we shall not perish, as long as we remain but true to ourselves. And there are many signs of truth in the country, even if there is also much proof of doubt in the town. Go and stay in a little English village, and look at the roll in the church porch ; read the names of the young men who have gone from almost every cottage ; and lift up your hearts. Go and stay, as the writer of these lines has stayed, in a fine old English county, with a tradition of steady and stalwart service running through the centuries : hear from its men how the King's Shropshire Light

Infantry can fight; and lift up your hearts. Only look on the face of the country-side: see the primroses yellow on the banks, and the daffodils laughing in the fields; and lift up your hearts.

The country church, the honour of the shire, the hills and the valleys lying fresh in the spring sunshine—all these are things that knock at men's hearts, and, entering, are gathered into that quiet inward memory, which in the day of trial will be a reservoir of strength and comfort for the spirit. These are the waters, not of Lethe, but of remembering; and theirs are memories which quieten the blood, and temper the spirit to a steady edge of endurance. Let us therefore, if we lie abroad in foreign parts, and have nothing at our call but our memories, cherish the memory of our English May; and let us, if our way lies in England, and our going along English lanes, renew and steep our minds in the essential beauty of our country in this her month of months. The children carry their garlands green about the streets; let us carry our hearts high about our occupations. Every man among us may, if he wills, be an Antaeus; from new and quickening contact with the earth that bore him, and the land that reared him, he

may rise refreshed for the grim, unending struggle of the year.

We and our land are no strangers to each other. Each has given to the other, and each has taken from the other. Our earth has nursed us in a soft lap of anemone-strewn woodland, shimmering with bluebells, and she has suckled our mind with gracious memories; while we have set on her the mark of our thoughts—planting our hedgerows, running our lanes, and graving our furrows. Her diurnal course does not whirl us round in the insensate company of mere stones and trees; we swing round the shining sun in a familiar shining country, which has made us what we are, as we in turn have made it what it is. It is no hard thing to love a land so intimately knit to our being, and least of all on a morning of May, when it wears its beauty like a garment. Nor is it a hard thing in a land so old, and so full of story, to bring our love far out of the storied past. Our land has smiled on hundreds upon hundreds of May mornings; and our people has found for itself old customary ways of welcoming the coming of that smile—ways that run back through the years, and link us with our forefathers; ways that make us feel that we are standing,

in this hour, not for our own honour only, but for the honour of men long dead, who cherished the gentle observances of spring which we cherish to-day, and who—just as they did the little things which we still do—would have done, and trust us to do, the great things we have now to do.

Year after year, on each May morning, a crowd gathers on one of our bridges in Oxford—the bridge over which the retreating Cavaliers marched out long ago, and the men of the New Model entered, with psalms on their lips, to take possession of the city. Year after year you may hear, as the strokes of the Magdalen bell, that always die with a soft, sad cadence, ring out the hour of five, the sound of the choir from the top of the college tower—a sound from mid-air, celestial—praising Him Who made earth and her seasons. It is an old rite, and it is not intermitted. Some new things, indeed, you might have noticed this morning, which you would not have seen in past years. There were wounded soldiers in the crowd, and there were nurses, but there were few or no students. They are elsewhere. But some of them, perhaps, sent their thoughts flying back to their old college, and remembered mornings in May when life was a golden

hour, and Care was not yet seated behind the horseman.

But Care may be seated behind us, and none the less we may ride on gallantly. 'Since the fates of death are upon us none the less—thousand upon thousands, whom no man can flee or avoid—let us go forward.' Homer's words are a brave motto, and our young men may write them fittingly on their banner, in brave gold, on blameless white. When the day comes (and it will come) they will go forward. To us May morning by Magdalen Tower, and the fields yellow by the river with their flowers; to us, too, a heart high and strong for fate and the future. To them the long line of trench, and shrieking shell; to them, too, a heart higher than ours, and stronger than ours, for a sterner fate and a future more darkly veiled.

III. THE NATIONS OF THE WEST

THE QUEEN OF THE NATIONS

From 'The Times,' May 7 and 8, 1915

IT is many centuries since there was a king of the nations. Perhaps the Roman, in his day, deserved of the peoples that title of majesty. By his sovereignty he ruled them, and on their wills he set the habit of peace. When his grave order passed away, the sovereignty of the world passed away too; and, though by the courtesy of Europe the title of Holy Roman Emperor might remain to carry a great memory, there was no king of the nations, and each of them did as seemed right in its eyes.

But it were perhaps no enormity of the fancy to think that for centuries of our modern history the nations have known a queen, or to believe that France, by the generosity of her impulse and the contagion of her thought, has made and maintained herself regent mistress of all the humaner peoples. Without any control of sovereignty, and

without the burden of any yoke, she has set herself in men's minds and throned herself in their thoughts. Her University of Paris, from the days of Abelard to the days of Gerson and D'Ailey, was the central hearth of European thought, and drew equally to its warmth the great Italian Aquinas, the subtle Englishman Ockham, and the encyclopædic German Albert the Great. She set the fashions of chivalry; she gave to the mediæval world its chansons and chantefables, its fabliaux and romaunts; she built the cathedrals of Amiens and Notre Dame, of Reims and Vezelai. From her soil sprang the Crusades, and her people carried the Cross of Christ by sea and land to the Holy Sepulchre, in order that they might plant a Christian kingdom in place of a Turkish emirate on the far sands of Syria. The perfect pattern of a mediæval king was her St. Louis, who thought it a small thing to be the Soldan's prisoner in Egypt, or even to die on the coast of Tunis, if only his Master's kingdom might be advanced by his sufferings. Who could do other than love her for all that she was to Europe during the Middle Ages? Villon, when he wrote his Ballade 'against the enemies of France,' could imagine no punishment

enough for him who wished ill to the realm of France.

'Let him be met by the fire-breathing beasts that Jason met when he sought the Golden Fleece; let him, like Nebuchadnezzar, be changed from man to beast for seven years; let him have loss and fortune of war as cursed as had the Trojans through the rape of Helen; let him be buried with Tantalus and Proserpine in the marshes of the underworld; let him have heavier suffering than Job, and lie confined in the maze of Dædalus; . . . let him be robbed of peace and hope, for no man deserves to enjoy happiness who could wish ill to the realm of France:

'Qui mal vouldroit au royaulme de France!'

Villon's words still touch the heart to-day. It echoes with a ready gladness his proud wish for 'perte et guerre vilaine' to all his country's enemies. She was so gracious and bountiful a queen among all the peoples of the Middle Ages, dispensing so royally from the abundance of her treasures to all her neighbours. Sometimes, indeed, she fell into a Prussian rigour, and condescended upon a Prussian worship of necessity of State. Her Charles of Anjou,

who provoked the Sicilian Vespers, was an unlovely figure; and her Philippe le Bel, fair as he was of person, was an unfair foe of the Templars, whom he suppressed, and the Pope, whom he insulted. These were the aberrations of her genius; and one loves rather to think of the lovely things she gave to the world in early spring-time verse and high philosophy, in heroic impulse of act and burning splendour of faith. France and the spirit of France—what were the world without them? And what is the culture of Germany by the side of the old spreading trees of France—trees still green with leaves and still aglow with blossom—but the mushroom growth of yesternight? Why Otto of Freising came from Germany to Paris for the understanding of the subtleties of logic seven hundred years before the logic of Hegel saw the light.

So France gave to the world civilisation, which is the common property of us all, and made not her boast of culture, or of any other peculiar prerogative of her own.

'France!' (so sang of her Charles of Orleans, one of the stock of her rulers) 'of old times men named thee in every land the treasure of nobility; for each found in thee bounty and honour, loyalty and gentlehood,

clergy and wit, courtesy and prowess. What champions Christendom found in thee! Hardly need I tell—Charlemagne and Roland are witnesses enough, and St. Louis too, who brought the rude Saracen to naught by travail and valiancy in his day. The Chronicles show forth thy story without lying, O realm of France, most Christian and free!'

And so, living as he did in evil days, he prayed, as many a Frenchman may pray to-day, that before age came upon him the time of peace might everywhere arrive, according to his heart's desire, and he might see, and see quickly, the evils of France all finished.

But it was not only in the Middle Ages that France was the model in which each might find whatever he sought. Again in modern days—from the accession of the Grand Monarch, far back in the seventeenth century, till the last times of Napoleon in the beginning of the nineteenth—the name of France was almost conterminous with the name of civilisation. Descartes and Pascal were the models of philosophy, metaphysical and moral; Bossuet was the most admired of the masters of divinity; Racine and Molière set the fashions to our English

drama; the Government, the Court, the very palace of Louis XIV. were the ideal which every German prince sought not indeed to rival (that were impossible), but, at any rate, to copy as faithfully as he could. Frederick the Great of Prussia sat at the feet of Voltaire; and men still greater than Frederick sat at the feet of Rousseau. Kant and Hegel learned the true nature of human freedom from the author of the 'Contrat Social,' and it were a hard thing to discover what the Romantic movement did not owe to that arch-priest of sentiment and high pontiff of Nature, who wrote the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' and 'Emile.' Above all, the political ideals of revolutionary France—ideals born of her fertile thought and suckled by her innumerable wrongs; ideals baptized in the blood of the Terror, and nursed to strength, like some young Hercules, through struggles with the ancient monarchies of Europe—these became a new and renovating gospel, which marched irresistibly through Europe, and built for men's minds, within the short space of a quarter of a century, a new and a more spacious dwelling-place. In the Revolutionary Wars, as in the Crusades (for indeed, there is no small analogy between these two great out-

bursts of French chivalry), France gave to the world what she had found for herself, and, nothing grudging, nothing extenuating, poured out the whole passion of her heart to be a quickening and an inspiration for the nations. The 'Marseillaise' was blown round the world on her bugles; the hour of her glory came upon her; in the name of the liberty of the people, and in the cause of the equality of men, she proclaimed a war against all tyrants, and a crusade against all oppressors.

The cold historian may weigh her motives in the balance; but no man whose heart has swelled to the throb of a great idea, no man who has ever felt the overmastering impulse to cry aloud without shame good tidings of salvation, but will recognise that an apostleship was laid upon France by the fierce pressure of her thought, and that she went forth, simply and gladly, in the sense of a solemn calling. It was no perfect gospel that she had to preach. It was a gospel from which she ultimately banished God Himself (if man can ever banish God from any noble aspiration); but when all is said, and when all was done, it was a generous gospel, given out of a generous heart. It was no aim of hers to

stamp the name and the rights and the power of France on the face of Europe. Rather it was her care to set and stamp the rights of man everywhere, as fully and as deeply as she had set them in her own conscience and stamped them on her own life. But men and nations go out to find one thing, and return home bearing another. Our purposes twist in our hands; and even a will thrice-steeled shall hardly achieve its pure intention. France had willed liberty, equality, fraternity—those three. She found for herself, and she gave to others, equality before the law; but she found, and she gave to others, a military rule in place of liberty, and a sword instead of fraternity. She had gone out in quest of a republic; she came home bearing Napoleonism. But there was a nobility even in Napoleonism, and the first and the third Napoleon both wrought for Europe as well as for France. Without their work the unity of Italy, and the unity of Germany herself, could hardly have been accomplished. Both made themselves, consciously or unconsciously, the agents of great and universal ideals that have enured to the common advantage. Even under her Cæsars France never forgot, what under her Kaisers Germany has never learned, that a great

State has a mission to discharge not unto itself alone, but to the general cause and in the general service of humanity. *Remittentur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum.* 'For she loved much.' Shall not our last words be with Villon: 'No man deserves to enjoy happiness who could wish ill to the realm of France'? Shall not our prayer be the prayer of Charles of Orleans, that before old age comes upon us peace may everywhere arrive, and the evils of France be all finished—yea, if it may be, finished for ever?

WE AND THEY

From 'The Times,' December 28, 1915

ANTITHESIS is a ready device, and it is an easy thing to make counterfeit presentments of national characters, which shall give the one the very figure of Hyperion, and show the other

'a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother.'

Due discount must be taken from such essays in comparison. The partiality even of the philosopher, who in matters of national concern is apt to become an all too human being, must admit deduction and rebate. Such premise made—a sprinkling of incense, as it were, on the altar of the fugitive Goddess Truth, who, being a sister of Peace, fled into exile when she heard the gates of war grind open—we may play our Hamlet to the listening world. But let us play our part honourably. Truth may perhaps hear us from her far resting-place, on some Asian

steep where our passion cannot penetrate the pure clear air, but our voices still may carry. May she forgive what she hears amiss; may she cleanse and purify it after her own image for the day of her returning; and O, may that day come quickly, that we may worship her, the only true end of all thinking and writing, 'in spirit and in truth'!

* * * * *

The tradition of England is the rule of law. The tradition of Prussia is necessity of State. The glories of our English blood are Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights. The glories of Prussia are organizations of armies and annexations of territories. In our Temple of Fame are written the names of Pym and Pitt and many other masters of assemblies, whose words were as goads of the people. In her Alley of Victory stand the figures of stark kings and generals, who wrought victory by the shedding of blood and consolidated the State in a rigour of iron. By all these things we may see that in England there lives, and has lived for centuries, a State which is based on law; that in Prussia there lives, and has lived for at least 200 years, a State which is based on

its own sheer strength. It were indeed a mere darkening of counsel to leave unregarded the shining and venerable names of great German jurists like Savigny and Gierke, or to forget that the first achievement of united Germany was to devise—what England for all her centuries of legal growth has never accomplished—a code and a system of law which is a model to all the world. But while our law, unsystematised as it may be, has so embraced and enfolded our English society, that it permeates not only the life of the citizen but also the life of the State, the law of Prussia—a law of iron for the citizen—remains a law of wax for the State. Not unto law, but unto necessity of State and power, is majesty ascribed in the doxology of Prussia. In her political creed necessity of State, 'which knows no law,' is the source of right; and power, which in these latter days has shown itself one with terror, is the measure of the Just. And so, at the end of July, 1914, while English statesmen looked at a European treaty, and thought of international law, the leaders of Prussia looked at a map of Belgium, and thought of military topography. Under the direct penetration of their steely gaze our ways may well seem

ways of tortuous chicane, and they may feel that we argued on vital issues of national existence in the spirit and language of attorneys. Yet those who know most of England will be the first to recognise that the ground of law, which she took against Germany, was exactly the ground which a people with her history and institutions was bound to take. And to those who believe that a law and rule of life, whether created by the customs of a people, or by the legislation of a Sovereign, or by a treaty between States, is the sovereign prerogative of humanity, by which men raise themselves above the beasts that perish—to those who believe that law is the dearest bought gain of all our human civilisation—to such the cause and the plea of England will seem no lawyer's pretence, but the sternest of all the realities which the mind of men can attain.

* * * * *

On what has been said of the place of law in English life there follow some corollaries. Ours, we may see, is a civilian State, which for long years detested the thought of a standing army, and even to-day will only permit the existence of military disci-

pline on an annual tenure. Our sports are no imitations by the civilian of the soldier's way of life, like the duelling of German universities; they are the civilian's own invention. They are held in none the less honour for that. Our soldiers turn constantly to these civilian games as gladly and as ardently as if they were the real business and occupation of their lives. Nor is it, perhaps, a folly to hold that the clean rigour of our games, with all their laws of play and all their constant training in the exertion of strength and wits within the limits of freely accepted rules, has tempered and disciplined the whole fashion of our fighting. What was learned in sport may be remembered in deadly earnest. Our cult of games, which distracts us too much and too often from serious work, and makes us lag behind peoples of a steadier application, preserves us none the less from the terrible perils into which a people devoted to work with a single and undivided heart may readily fall in time of war. The deadly concentration of a mind which never relaxes its rigour in play, the passionate earnestness of a combatant who has never learned in a mimic struggle to abide by limiting rules—these

produce the temper which, wedded to the doctrine of necessity of State, has for its issue poisoning by gases and massacre by submarines.

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A military State will necessarily despise a civilian State ; a State which wages war to the knife, and thinks it not only right, but a bounden duty, to exhaust every resource of its enemy—intellectual and moral as well as material — by every possible means, will necessarily contemn a State whose soldiers affect any grace of lightheartedness, or obscure by any folly and pretence of chivalry the bare, grim honesty of war. But it is better to understand your enemy than to hate him, for understanding helps to victory, but hate is a blinding of the eyes. And the foundation of the difference between us and our enemy yet remains to be seen ; for it does not go to the roots to say that we pit our law against their force, or our civilian love of fair play against their passion of military rigour. Perhaps we shall not greatly err if we find the tap-root of our difference running down on the one side into their docility and on the other into our instinct for truancy. For whatever the reason of our idiosyncrasy,

we are a race of truants, who insist on a large latitude in our own home, and are prone to wander to the ends of the earth for the greater ease of our long limbs and in order to find a wider room for our humours. We can abide the even pressure of law, so long as it is equally distributed among us ; and it may even suit our humour to 'have the law' of one another and to litigate to our heart's content. What we cannot tolerate is to be set in mental uniform and placed under spiritual drill. That is what our enemy tolerates, partly because he must, being set in the middle of Europe, in the thick of the grinding pressure of frontiers, and partly because use has become second nature, and he has come to love what he began by tolerating. His humour does not suit with ours, nor ours with his. And so war is engaged to-day between a multitude of truants, united by the one common bond of law, and a single articulated mechanism, whose every part is nicely adjusted to the whole in the unison of a common revolution.

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The end is not yet ; but one cannot forbear a certain sympathy for the multitude of truants, particularly when they are ourselves.

After all, the odds are heavy, and the hearts of men are readily engaged on the side of a bonny fighter who has not stopped to count the odds too cautiously. The drilled union of the enemy towers over our waywardness and frowns on our truancy. And yet we cannot cease to be what we are. Our Press girds at our Government; our labourers chide against their masters; and the poor earnest patriot wrings his hands in misery over our ways. It is in truth a great pity that we carry the precious vessel of liberty so clumsily and with so much jostling against one another. But we should not be free if we were drilled to a perfection of fetching and carrying; and it is only free men who can carry the vessel of freedom. This is the eternal contradiction of our cause. Freedom is so precious that her cause is worth the sacrifice of all things—except itself; and yet it is the sacrifice of the cause which seems the easiest way to its preservation. But let us lift up our hearts. We have great allies in the world of human powers—allies we are proud to call our friends and to name by the name of brothers. And above, in the world of spiritual things (a world as sadly invaded and ravaged, alas! as the human world below, but a real world,

and a living world, none the less), we have allies whose great company is such that, so long as it is ours, our cause stands firm for ever—

'Our friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.'

'CRUEL NECESSITY'

From 'The Times,' April 29, 1915

ON the night of January 30, 1649, my Lord Southampton and a friend were sitting very melancholy in the Banqueting House at Whitehall by the body of their dead King.* About two o'clock in the morning they heard a slow step on the stairs, and a man, muffled in a cloak which hid his face, entered the room. 'He approached the body, considered it very attentively for some time, and then shook his head, sighed out the words, "Cruel Necessity."' The man, my Lord Southampton guessed from his voice and gait, was Oliver Cromwell. The words which he sighed out re-echo down the centuries like a wind wailing :

'When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold.'

* The story only rests on tradition. But the tradition is good, and the story may very well be true.

Cruel Necessity—Saeva Necessitas—she is an immemorial goddess. Long ago the Roman poet saw the set cruelty of her face, and marked her iron hands full of clamping nails and cleaving wedges. He recognised in her a universal power, which bound all men to their doom, and hewed in sunder all human imaginings. To-day, if their language be true, she has made her house with the Germans, and appointed her chosen shrine in the pages of their apologetics. *Not—dringende Not*—who has not heard the sad refrain? 'We are now in a state of necessity,' the Imperial Chancellor cries to the chosen goddess, beseeching her to cleave a way with her wedges through Belgium and the sworn treaties which encompass Belgium; 'and necessity knows no law.' 'Necessity is upon us,' urged the Prussian Government in 1908, defending the law for the expropriation of Polish landowners; 'she bids us, in the name of our German culture, to drive a wedge through the Poles, and to bind Germans down to the soil in their stead.' 'My policy,' said a German Governor to the Danes of Schleswig early in this century, 'is a policy which is apt to be hard and inconsiderate, where necessary.' Necessity, necessity—it is always necessity. One may

almost imagine the commander of the submarine which sank the *Falaba* sighing out Cromwell's words to the engulfing sea, as he watched his victims sinking to those nether depths, which shall yet give up their dead when He who is throned above necessity shall come once more in judgment.

What, then, is necessity, and what is the place of her habitation? One necessity there is, of which we may be sure; and that is the necessity of Nature. Hers are those fixed dispositions and unabridgeable laws which are the compelling rhythm in the swing of the universe; hers the falling apple and the shooting star, the oscillating ocean and the crescent moon. Of such necessity spoke the riddling sage of Ephesus, saying that 'if the sun should exceed his measures, the Furies, who are the auxiliaries of Justice, would track him down.' Of such necessity, again, wrote the greatest of German poets, singing of the sound of the going of the sun as he fulfils his appointed orbit in thunder. This is that Divine compulsion, which preserves the stars from wrong, and by which the most ancient heavens are fresh and strong. But it were an insolent arrogance to claim compulsion so high and unsearchable for the demands of our human solicitudes, or to

vindicate for the purposes of our wavering wills a communion with the solemn majesties of nature. The necessity which we proclaim for all the tumults that we raise is a necessity of another order. It is a necessity made by ourselves, and imposed by ourselves, as if it were a law of nature, on the goings of our own minds.

Of this necessity which we make for ourselves there are many forms. Character is destiny, says the determinist; and it is at any rate true that the accumulation of purposes we have willed, and the body of habits we have indued, become for us something of an *ineluctabile fatum*, which we hardly wish to defy if we can, and hardly can if we wish. Equally tyrannous, equally fateful may often be the compulsion of some single master-purpose, on which our wills have fastened with a convulsive grip, making it the substance of themselves, and themselves its vehicles and agents. This, or something of this order, is the necessity of which the Germans speak. Their wills have fastened on a master-purpose of preserving and promoting their own way of thinking and their own way of living, as these are expressed in their society and organized by their State; and, baptizing this

purpose by the name of culture, they have said to the nations: 'Our culture is our necessity—and yours. Long holding nails shall bind it firmly to all that it requires; strong cleaving wedges shall hew through all impediments to its perfection.' For this culture is, to their thinking, a Divine burden on their nation; and whatever is logically necessary to its carrying is a Divine necessity, which may be cruel, as the necessities of the high gods sometimes seem to be, but is none the less inevitable. 'Cruel necessity,' they sigh; and on the altar of her logic they sacrifice their own subjects of an alien nationality in the East, and their impeding neighbours in the West—to-day the Belgians; to-morrow, it may chance, the Dutch. He who wishes the end wishes the means; and they have wished their end to the uttermost. So the end comes to consecrate the means; and so they fall into the old doctrine of Machiavelli, who—very curiously and yet quite logically—has come to stand in these latter days beside the heroic figure of Luther as the prophet and precursor of the national State devoted to the supreme necessity of its own peculiar culture.

In all this there is system; in all this there is logic; in all this, so far as logic is

necessity, there is necessity. But there are few human principles that are irrefragable; and it is as true a saying, and as worthy to be believed, that the means may condemn the end as that the end may justify the means. 'If this principle can only be consummated in this way and by these means,' many will say, 'it had better never be consummated at all. By its fruits it is known —and by its fruits it is damned.' There is nothing that can stand, and no work that can be established, which does not square with the moral sense of our race. Casuistry may multiply its scope; from spinning subtle gossamers to cover with a glistering foil our private sins, it may rise to spinning fine excusatory cobwebs about some great national wrong-doing. It may refine away for a time the moral sense of the casuist and his disciples; it cannot endure, and, like the poor, filmy thing that it is, will be shrivelled into nothingness by the fulness of the light.

There is one necessity which is upon all human beings; and that is the necessity to do the thing which we know to be right. The greatest of German thinkers once spoke of two things which were a perpetual astonishment to him—the starry heavens and the moral law. These are the two basic

necessities of our universe. Above, in serried ranks, night upon night, night upon night, the army of unalterable law marches around the ancient track. Lucifer may arise from the pit; there is no starry night whose aspect will not drive him back astonied. Below, marking the orbit of our human goings, stand Right and Duty, which were not born yesterday or yester year, but were always there, so that no man knows the time of their appearing. The insurgent passion of our will, wildly resolved on its own purposes, may fly never so loftily; its wings will flag, and its rush be spent, in the uncharted spaces which lie beyond the law. Not in vain, and not at random, have poet and philosopher alike seen, as in a glass darkly, the starry heavens reflected in the moral law of man. The Duty that preserves the stars preserves our human kind. Not to Necessity are our worship and sacrifice due, but to the Stern Daughter of the Voice of God:

> 'Who art victory and law
> When empty terrors overawe;
> From vain temptations dost set free;
> And calm'st the weary strife of frail
> humanity!'

IV. TAMEN USQUE RECURRET

THE PALIMPSEST OF WAR

From 'The Times,' April 17, 1915

IN the Middle Ages, when parchment was a rare and precious thing, and men, eager to set down their thoughts in writing or to copy out once more the thoughts of admired masters of wisdom, were tripped in their eagerness by want of the due material, they were wont to take an old manuscript and to prepare a clean sheet by erasing the old characters—not so drastically, however, but that the old script may still be discerned by a seeing eye through the new penmanship, and the old words still shine, however dimly, through the cloud of new words by which they have been obscured. To such a manuscript scholars have given the name of palimpsest.

Ruminating thought, which detects sermons in stones, may in this year of our Lord discover a palimpsest in the unrolled map of Europe. Graved and scored with characters through all recorded time, it is being graved

and scored once more, by a pen of iron and with ink of blood, in characters that seem to-day indelible. History, after all, has its rhythm and its recurrence. Where the graving ran deepest in the days of old the profoundest score may still be seen to-day. The valleys and the waterways where our forefathers joined battle witness now, in their eternal sightlessness, the locked struggle of the children. There are some channels cut by nature through which the fretting tide of human action seems destined to run for evermore. From the beginning of time invaders have crossed the desert of Sinai to batter at the gates of Egypt. Here Seleucids met Ptolemies; here, eight centuries ago, crusading Franks and their generous rival Saladin vied in the race for the inheritance of the Fatimites; here immemorial Pharaohs stood on guard, and here there stands on guard to-day a strange Pharaoh from an island no Pharaoh ever knew—a Pharaoh who, strange though he be, is governing the fellaheen of the Nile (and this seems stranger still) in the very ways trodden by the feet of the Ptolemies two thousand years ago. Wherever the eyes are turned, the same haunting recurrence seems to brood. There are times when one feels without knowing,

and knows without understanding, that somehow, and at some time, all this has happened before. It is in such times that we are living now. He who looks at the waterway that leads to Constantinople ; he who looks at the plains of Poland ; he who looks at the fields of Belgium, knows, if he knows the past, that the Athenian trireme swam of old where the English Dreadnought floats to-day ; that Slav and German wrestled a thousand years ago on the plains where they struggle now ; that Belgium was a battle-ground as long ago as the day, and even before the day, when Cæsar beat the Nervii.

To one who, by the hazard of work and the chance of reading, has been led to study in these latter weeks the history of Greece in the days of the Athenian Empire, and the fortunes of England in the inception of the Hundred Years' War, such thoughts come crowding fast. The fortunes of Athens, one reads, hung on the abundance of the supply of corn which she could draw from the granaries of the Black Sea (the Hospitable Sea, as it was called in her language); and the free passage of the waterway by which that corn was borne on the current that sets down the Bosporus, through the Dardanelles, was her cardinal care and sovereign policy.

Pericles could well have understood the mission of the *Queen Elizabeth*, though he would have been anxious, if he had been one of the Athenian generals directing her mission, with an anxiety other than that of our English Lords of the Admiralty; for he would have known that, unless she made her gallant way to her goal, starvation looked Athens in the face, and, with starvation, the fall of her imperial power. Nor again, if we may leap the centuries abruptly, would the chronicler who records the first beginnings of our Hundred Years' War have felt that his lot had fallen in strange and unknown places, if he were living and writing among us at this hour. He has much to say, as it is, of 'pirates' from the Norman ports who fell on English shipping, and sometimes, too, on English towns and villages by the sea, from Plymouth up to Rye. He has still more to say of expeditions from England, in close alliance with the men of Flanders, which crossed the seas unmolested in a gallant pomp of shipping, and, resting on Bruges and Ghent, fought stoutly in the parts of Terouenne and Tournai.

As long as geography remains the same, and the face of the earth remains as it was

established by its Maker, the recurrent rhythm of martial history will come unbidden to the ear. It has even its fascination; it has even its curious and paradoxical comfort. We may feel that the generations of mortal men are linked each to each by a community of suffering; that what has befallen Scarborough once befell Rye and Winchelsea; that armies have stood embattled under Lille as they still stand to-day. 'O man, who hast suffered burdens heavier to be borne, trust God to bring an end to these as well.' And yet, whatever the fascination and even the comfort, of this rhythm of history, the conclusion of the whole matter cannot but seem to be despondency. Have we marched breast forward through the ages, fighting and, as we thought, faring forward, and was it all for this? Shall the epitaph on our human kind be nothing better than a forlorn: 'As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be'? What advantageth it any man that war is fought in the old way, in the ancient places, if war and the rumours of war shall never cease from our hearts?

Are our hearts, then, also palimpsests, like the earth on which we dwell? Are our minds the same abiding stuff, on which a

God who is only a God of battles eternally writes his crimson script, only erasing the message of one age to write in the next with a direr pen dipped still more deep a message still more charged with the ancient woe? There are times when hope grows faint, and human affairs seem to the tired eye and the aching brain a mere whirling revolution round one fixed desperate centre. Bound to the wheel, man turns full cycle in the course of the ages. 'You know as well as we do,' said the Athenians of old to the people of Melos, 'that right, as the world goes, is only a question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.' 'We are now in a state of necessity,' the Germans said last year to the people of Belgium, 'and necessity knows no law.' Our human hearts beat to recurrent thoughts as inevitably as the hills and valleys shake to the recurrent tramp of marching armies. Who shall find a new thing under the sun? Strong and thrice-armed in a just cause freely espoused by happy warriors, England may boast to-day that, without her rival's incessant training for war, she can gather around her for battle, as the fatal day at length dawns red and stormy, a willing people who will gladly

rise to the measure of her need, and accomplish by free initiative, with a ready versatility, all that a special compulsion enables her foe to achieve. Pericles, in the name of Athens, threw the same proud defiance to Sparta more than two thousand years ago. And Pericles could add to his boast in his day, as truly as England can add in hers, that his country was an example to all the known world of the sovereign virtues of free speech and free government, free originality of thought and free toleration of all opinion.

But the thoughts that recur through the centuries are not only thoughts of might or thoughts of defiance; they are also thoughts of a permanent peace of the world. And this, too, has its sadness—a sadness perhaps the most poignant of all. Our generation is not the first to dream of ending war by war, or to send its thoughts flying ahead into the future to build visionary mansions for a united humanity. Brave and hoping hearts have lived before us; and O! the hope in which they dressed themselves is the hope we cherish to-day. No thought has more power to rend; no view of the recurrent ebb and tide of human hopes and fears is more desolating. Our forefathers had high

and generous aspirations a hundred years ago, when a quarter of a century's fighting had sobbed itself to sleep, and a Holy Alliance seemed to promise halcyon days to Europe. Their aspirations were not fulfilled. Within a few tens of years the winds of war were awake again, and rushed from their caverns, in sweeping gusts and heavy gales, to traverse a continent from end to end. Their fretting clamour arose, as it arises now, to the starry silence of the skies; and the white radiance of eternity was stained, as it is stained to-day, by the drifting smoke of the guns.

And yet it were idle, and worse than idle, to despair too quickly. For there is a difference, after all, between the tone and temper of this war and the tone and temper of the last war that England waged. Here, at least, there has not been recurrence. Into that war we rushed as if it were a joyous venture; into this we have gone as if it were —what, indeed, it is—a bitterly cruel necessity. We have not flaunted our flags, or made merry over our enemies. We have possessed our souls in quietness, and we have said in our hearts that there will be one day, and one only, for the flying of flags and the singing of praises unto our God; one day for

which we live; one day on which we shall draw happy breath once more—the day of peace. We have seen our enemies dying fine deaths bravely for a cause which, to our thinking, is neither brave nor fine; and when they have died like that, for a cause like that, we have given them all that we can, and all that we may—the respect brave men deserve. We have hated a cause; we have not hated, and we pray that we may never hate, the combatants.

It may be that we have thus come, in this our day, to stand on the top of golden hours. If we can but capture these hours, and make them ours for ever—if we can but make the present temper of the nation our eternal possession—it may be that there remains a rest after all, if not for us, at any rate for our children.

THE NEW PURITANS

From 'The Times,' March 18, 1915

MENTORS arise in these days, and pronounce a ban on cakes and ale. The times are times of strain, and men instinctively feel that 'who lives in a time of strain should live in a strain himself.' Instinct is often a true guide. And yet second thoughts are sometimes best, for they are reason's criticism of instinct. A violin string does not last long if it is always screwed to its highest pitch. Men's minds cannot always live in a state of tension. Either they snap, or they slip down with a run to the old level —if not below. When we resolve to live tensely, we are in danger of becoming hypocrites to ourselves, and censors of others. Playing to an inner gallery, which never hisses and often applauds, we fall into the Hercles' vein. Ingeminating to others the memento that they live *patriai tempore iniquo*, we become censors of football matches, critics of race meetings, Catos to all delights.

Nero fiddled while Rome was burning. Charles II. caught flies while the Dutch guns were thundering in the Medway. They went to the other extreme; and history has not applauded the equanimity they preserved in arduous times. Many have even refused to admire Hegel, who wrote Hegelianese subtleties within sound of the guns of Jena. The zeal of the tragic consumes us in tragic days; and we do not suffer gladly such incongruous spirits as Nero or Charles II. or Hegel.

Yet Nature, with her wise economy, has mixed things with a curious incongruity. It takes all sorts of men, and all conditions of mind, to make her world. In that world sorrow jostles laughter, and yet we find it a world in which we can live, as we could not live in a world of unmixed sorrow or unmixed laughter. He who held the mirror up to Nature most cunningly showed us in *Lear* a tragic old King cheek by jowl with a jesting fool. He knew that the unredeemed tragedy of a solitary Lear would be the mirroring of a world intolerable and untrue. There is no tragedy more tragic than war. There has been no war more terrible than this war. Unless we mix some laughter we shall crack. If we falsify Nature's wise

economy, and rack ourselves to the pitch of tragic intensity, we are undone. Let us not, like the Puritans of old, close theatres, or suppress race meetings, or even shut down alehouses overmuch. It will but lead to swift reaction. The Puritans were tragically earnest in the ten years before 1660. There were cakes and ale in abundance after 1660, and ginger was hot in the mouth.

There is a certain psychological necessity for 'carrying on as usual' both our business and, in whatever subdued and modest measure, some amount of pleasure. That we have gone after pleasure in excess for some years past is very true. That we shall go after pain in excess in the coming months is perhaps unlikely. But it is perhaps true that just as we needed cleansing lest we perished of pleasure, so we need cheering lest we perish of pain. Day and night, and night and day, the black cloud of war lowers and its thunders speak. In the dearest passage of a song its memory darts back to stab the mind. And shall we all—

> 'Sit upon the ground
> And tell sad stories of the deaths of kings'?

I have never been to a race meeting in all my life. I have been to the theatre on

an average once a year. I cannot conceive myself going to either nowadays. But I can very well conceive better men than I am going to the play—and even to the picture theatre. I am even glad to see them going. After all, I feel, something of the old world survives the Deluge. Men still go about the old streets in the old way.

Tragic sensibility varies from man to man and from class to class. It would be a pity to legislate for the multitude of the working men of England in terms of the sensibility of the man of taste. In a war which is engulfing three millions of the manhood of England our hearts are all engaged, whether we be rich or poor, high or low. But the poor wife gives her husband as a hostage to death every time he descends the mine. If she gives him as a hostage once more, in another cause, is the case so greatly altered? Perhaps. But those of us who write to the *Times* are not the best judges. And if I thought that the world heeded us, I should be perturbed.

The apostle who thought that all meats were lawful nevertheless held that we ought not to eat to the offending of the brethren. And the one form of Puritanism that I will practise with alacrity is abstention from any

pleasure to indulge in which might seem to our brethren in arms in dear and honoured France to be a thing unseemly. Here I will meet the demands of the Puritan in the gate. On other grounds I am critical. I love to think of Sir Thomas More dying with a jest. I long to think that my country, of which I was never more proud than I am now, can be as gaily gallant in great things as it can be mournfully serious in little things. I would have us meet the unseen with a cheer, and even with a smile, provided that no man is offended thereby.

Our hearts leaped in the early days of the war, and we felt that we had entered on a *vita nuova.* Perhaps we have. And yet we are the same men and women still. And the more we try to live our old lives, in the old way, but with an added something of restraint and consideration, the less we try to scale impossible heights of exaltation, the more will our children call us, not perhaps blessed, but at any rate sober fathers who knew their duty to the coming age, and who, knowing the perils of reaction, were resolved that the children's teeth should not be set on edge, because the fathers had eaten sour grapes.

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